

Red Flag Fire Alert Plan



What is a Red Flag Fire Alert?

A Red Flag Fire Alert (RFFA) is a notification system initiated by SB County fire agencies when high wildfire threat exists. It is based on weather conditions that increase the potential for catastrophic fires. Its purpose is two fold; first it notifies the public and agencies to the increased risk of wildfire; secondly it initiates specific measures where fire and law enforcement agencies provide additional fire protection measures. It can be initiated in all areas of the County or only specific areas.

Why does Santa Barbara County have a Red Flag Fire Alert Plan?

Public notification/alert of potential fire danger is very important. Santa Barbara County has an extensive history of catastrophic wildfires. Because of this fire history fire agencies work in cooperation with the National Weather Service to predict the weather conditions that increase fire risk. The RFFA Plan provides a means for preparing for heightened wildfire situations.

Two types of alerts may be initiated:

General Red Flag Fire Alert if temperatures exceed 85 degrees, winds exceed 15 mph, and relative humidity falls below 20 percent or;

Extreme Red Flag Fire Alert if temperatures exceed 90 degrees, winds exceed 20 mph, and relative humidity falls below 20 percent.

In addition to the dangerous weather conditions, a RFFA can be initiated when local fire fighting resources have been depleted or if unusual circumstances exist that make fire suppression more difficult.



What happens when a Red Flag Fire Alert is initiated?

- ☐ A sign like the one at the top, that reads "RED FLAG FIRE ALERT IN EFFECT" will be strategically placed throughout the high fire hazard areas.
- ☐ Local media will be advised and information will be updated regularly.
- ☐ All burn permits will be cancelled, and all burning will be banned.
- ☐ Fire agencies will increase patrols in RFFA areas and increase the number of fire response personnel.
- ☐ Other agencies, such as Public Works and Law Enforcement will be notified and may initiate additional protection measures.
- ☐ Under Extreme RFFA road fire closures on public lands, including roadways may be initiated.
- ☐ Public trails may be closed.

What should you do during a Red Flag Fire Alert?

- ☐ Review your Family Evacuation and Disaster Plans. Know where you will reunite if separated.
- ☐ Have a minimum of two routes in which to evacuate out of your area.

- ☐ Have an out of state emergency contact incase local phone service is interrupted.
- ☐ Have a portable Disaster Kit ready to take with you if you are asked to evacuate. It should contain all of your important paperwork, required medications and other valuables.
- ☐ Keep up to date through local media. **Do not call 911.**
- ☐ Stop any activities that have the potential to start a fire (camp fires, mowing, chain-sawing).
- ☐ Collect pets and have them so you can quickly load them in the event you must evacuate.
- ☐ Have your driver's license with proof of residence **on you**, in case of road closures.
- ☐ Park in your driveway facing out to keep roads accessible to emergency equipment.
- ☐ Consider and be prepared for early evacuation, especially if you have family members with mobility issues or young children.
- ☐ Communicate with neighbors to make them aware of the increase fire and safety risk.
- ☐ Be aware of suspicious vehicles or people. Write down information. **Do not call 911.**
- ☐ **Remember A RED FLAG ALERT MEANS TO BE PREPARED, AND NOT TO PANIC.**

Contact the Santa Barbara City Fire Department at (805) 564-5700 for more information on Red Flag Fire Alerts.